

Informational Interviews

Conduct an informational interview to find out more information about a particular industry or to network with potential employers.

Setting up the interview

- Research the person you would like to interview. If you are interested in a specific company, try to figure out who would be best to connect with there. Perhaps the manager or supervisor of a department. If you want more information about a specific industry, try to find someone who is in a role similar to what you are looking to do. If you want to know more about what it's like to do a study abroad or internship program, you could reach out to reach out to an alumni from your university.
- Email, call or message the person on LinkedIn to see if they would be interested in meeting.
- Explain what you are interested in chatting about.

How to prepare

- Learn everything you can about the topic you will be interviewing on.
- Decide what information you want to obtain.
- Prepare a list of questions (a 20-30 minute interview should be enough time)

Types of questions to ask

- Ask about the person's job.
- Ask about their experience and career path. What led them to this job?
- Ask about the company's goals.
- Ask about the industry and whether they see any challenges or growth in the future.
- If meeting about an experience, ask what they learned from the experience. What skills did they develop? What were the pros and cons and how did it help shape their career plan?

During the interview

- Dress appropriately, arrive early, be polite and professional.
- Thank the person for meeting with you.
- Remind them why you are there and ask if you can take notes.
- At the end of the interview, thank them again and tell them how helpful they've been.
- Ask if you can follow up with them.

Follow-up

- Allow 1-2 weeks after initial contact before you follow up.
- You can follow up by phone or email, even sending them a thank you card in the mail.
- Try to keep the connection alive. Add them on LinkedIn. Keep them up to date on your progress.

Sample Interview Questions:

- On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
- What training and education is required for this type of work?
- What personal qualities or abilities are important to be successful in this job?
- What career path led you to this position?
- What opportunities for advancement come with a position like this?
- Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
- What challenges do you see in this industry? (Pros/cons)